2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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579 in my ear that his son's wife would like to see me. So I rose and went through the back of the hall into a private house, and for the first time I met the Jewish girl who had been such an infernal nuisance three years earlier. She and her husband seemed extremely happy.

563 As I have already indicated, it was not only strained relations
•829 between Arabs and Jews which might lead to serious disturbances in the Colony, but also the ill-feeling which existed between the Arabs and the Somalis. The Arabs disliked the Somalis, partly because of their truculent behaviour which they found difficult to tolerate from people who were darker in colour than themselves and whom they considered to be an inferior race, and partly because Somalis flocked over from their country to Aden in search of work which the local Arabs held, with a considerable degree of truth, to be their own prerogative.

563 An example of Arab-Somali tension occurred in the spring
464 of 1934, but on this occasion the trouble was over at Bureikha where the Aden Refinery had recently come "on stream". When the Refinery Management were considering various solutions to their labour recruiting problem they had been warned that they were inviting trouble if they employed too many Somalis in work which could be done by local or Protectorate Arabs. The advice had been accepted, but it had not been followed as strictly as it should have been, with the result that there was a considerable Somali labour force at the Refinery.

563 It was my custom in the winter months to go out very early
579 on Sunday morning along the Khormaksar Beach to Abiyan, either with a friend or by myself, except for my faithful personal guards, there to shoot duck, or possibly a goose, or both if I was really lucky, and this custom was well-known to the Chief Secretary. Occasionally I would go out the evening before and stay the night and although normally I always let the Chief Secretary know when I expected to be absent from the Colony for a night, I sometimes forgot to do so. It was not altogether surprising, therefore, when one Saturday night at about ten o'clock he rang up Government House and, getting no reply, thought it was because I was away, and assumed that

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

From the "Upper Circle" 1958

000 TWO years have passed since I left Aden and ceased to take an active part in the South Arabian drama, and much has happened in the Middle East in that comparatively short space of time. I feel, therefore, that this work would not be complete if I did not refer briefly to major events which have directly and indirectly had their effect on both the Colony and the Protectorate. I do so as a spectator far removed from the Arabian stage, and in consequence I may have missed some of the finer points, but the general theme of the play has not been too difficult to follow.

•829 This is neither the place nor the time to examine the pros and cons of the action taken by the British Government in conjunction with the French Government following on the seizure in 1956 of the Suez Canal by President Nasser of Egypt. It is the effect of that action on the people of Aden with which I am concerned. At first the landing at Suez surprised and bewildered moderates and extremists in the Colony alike, but when the initial shock had worn off the moderates voiced their disapproval in reasonable language and the extremists made the most of the aggression aspect of the affair and condemned the, to their way of thinking, unprovoked attack upon an Arab country. There were those, but they were very few, who were prepared to say plainly that they hoped our action would result in the downfall of Nasser. But whatever may have been said in public there were many who in private desired our success, though they could not approve the method we had employed.

441 The trading community was gravely disturbed, not so much
434 by the possible political consequences of Suez, but by the
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2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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actual effect the closure of the Canal must have on their own business interests. Events showed that they had good reason to be concerned. Shipping fell away rapidly. The monthly average of ships entering the port of Aden for the six months prior to the crisis, that is, from May to October 1956, was 454. In November only 277 ships used the port, and by February 1957 the number was down to 93, the lowest point to be reached. Business throughout the Colony was similarly affected and the trade with passengers, on which the merchants of Steamer Point depend for their livelihood, virtually ceased as all passenger ships were diverted round the Cape.

The finances of the Colony were dealt a blow from which they have yet to recover and behind the immediate and, it was hoped, temporary dislocation of trade, there lurked the fear that the major Shipping Companies having once become accustomed to routing their ships by the Cape to Australia and the Far East, would continue to do so even when the Canal was open once again to world shipping. Mercifully for the Government of Aden and the trading community and all who depended upon them and the port for their living this fear proved to be groundless. Once the Canal was cleared and reopened the volume of shipping returned to normal much earlier than had been expected by the most optimistic.

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The bright side of the picture was that in spite of the divergence of views over Suez, personal relations between Government officials and their Arab friends remained unimpaired. At the same time the example of moderation shown by the local Press, in particular in the English language, was one which even the newspapers in the United Kingdom would have done well to have followed. All newspapers in Aden are Arab or Indian-owned and the two main English language papers are both Arab owned and Arab edited. All the more commendable, therefore, was their restraint during this most difficult period.

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In the Protectorate the reaction was somewhat different. There was satisfaction that Her Majesty's Government had, at last, shown that they were capable of strong and determined action and with it was born a hope in the hearts of the Rulers on the Yemen frontier that it would be the turn of that country

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

• 829 next. However, this satisfaction was short lived. When the Socialist Party in the United Kingdom turned against the Government's Suez policy then the Rulers knew that there could be no swift and happy ending to the venture. A united front by the political parties in the United Kingdom would have borne immediate fruit, but Nasser, heartened by his enemy divided at home, did what any one of the Protectorate Rulers would have done in similar circumstances. He hung on and waited while his efficient propaganda machine worked day and night to magnify the rift. The Socialist Party in this country did themselves no good in the Aden Protectorate by their conduct during the Suez crisis.

000 If our action in landing on Egyptian soil had been successful I have no doubt that there would have been general satisfaction in the Colony and in the Protectorate. Our apparent bias towards the Jews and our unpopular companions, the French, would have been overlooked and British prestige would have soared. Success is even more successful in the East than it is in the West, and much is forgiven a successful country or individual. Nasser of Egypt is the finest example. He has had success after success and his well-organised broadcasting services have turned his minor reverses into yet more successes. One of these days he will have a reverse which cannot be disguised, and then will come the real test of how firmly he is established on his pinnacle.

829 The decision of Her Majesty's Government to withdraw from Suez delighted our enemies and flabbergasted our friends, and our prestige in the Middle East went down and down. In Aden we did not suffer as badly as in some other places, and this may have been due to some extent to a general belief that the United States had let us down. It was rumoured that America had declined to support us in the event of Russia intervening and the disgust at what seemed to many, at first sight, to be our pusillanimous conduct was tinged with sympathy.

The birth of the United Arab Republic was greeted in the Colony with general satisfaction. It did not seem to the merchants that Aden's interests would be adversely affected

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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and this manifestation of Arab unity and progress was certainly not unwelcome to the public. Some there were who felt that the unusual union would not stand the test of time, but the anti-Communist aspect of the move made a general appeal. The Arab Muslim has a profound dislike of Communism, a creed, if it can be so described, fundamentally opposed to the teaching of Islam.

In the Protectorate the new Republic was viewed with little enthusiasm by the Rulers of the Western section of the Protectorate who were alive to the possibility of the Yemen becoming a partner in the union in spite of her monarchial system of government. They knew full well that the Imam's sole object in joining would be to secure Egyptian assistance in his almost open war against the Protectorate. The Crown Prince of the Yemen might have other and possibly more high-minded motives in wooing the Egyptians, but not so his father whose thoughts were concentrated on the furtherance of his claims to the Protectorate.

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The fears of the Rulers were fully justified. No sooner had the Yemen, already strengthened with arms from behind the Iron Curtain, joined the United Arab Republic than the disturbances on the Aden-Yemen frontier were intensified and Communist arms and Egyptian and Russian instructors aggravated an already dangerous situation.

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There is no doubt that the possession of automatic weapons and artillery by the Yemen has put a much more serious aspect on the acts of aggression which the Government of that country continues to initiate against the Protectorate, and the Protectorate Rulers most closely affected have been outspoken in their condemnation of the Yemen and in their demand that Her Majesty's Government fulfil her treaty pledges and take immediate action to prevent further aggression. Theirs is a very natural reaction, and it would seem that at long last a stronger line is to be taken with the Yemen. In May of this year the Royal Air Force carried out a successful attack on Yemen gun positions near the town of Qataba in the Yemen. These guns had been shelling British forces well within Protectorate limits in the Dhala Amirate. Nothing could have

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